

ABSTRACT

When a player cannot play back data because a master key held by the player has a generation older than the generation of a master key having been used for recording the data, or when a recorder cannot record data because a master key held by the recorder has a generation older than the generation of a master key necessary for recording to a recording medium, the user is prompted to renew the master key for acquisition of the necessary master key, thereby enabling the data playback or data recording. The renewed master key is distributed in such a form that can be processed by a specific device via a transmission medium such as a recording medium, network, IC card, telephone line, for example, via a tree-structured distribution system.

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